

House Republican Press Release

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Heagney Votes to Protect Confidential Press Sources



Shield Law Would Prohibit Government from Compelling Journalists to Testify

HARTFORD – The state House of Representatives approved legislation last night that would shield journalists from being compelled by any branch of government from having to reveal information obtained or received in confidence in gathering, receiving, or processing information for potential communication to the public or the identity of the source of the information. Similar “shield” laws are currently on the books in 31 states, as well as Washington, DC.

The bill also protects non-confidential information the media possess from subpoena with an exception for information necessary to a pending investigation, prosecution, or civil action not otherwise available, and of interest to the public.

Provisions in the bill make information and the identity of a source obtained in violation of the bill inadmissible in any action, proceeding, or hearing before a judicial, executive, legislative, or other body.

Representative Robert Heagney (R-Simsbury) voted in favor of the measure, which passed the House last night by a vote of 107-34 following a three hour debate.

“In many instances, the only way a journalist can get information when investigating a story is with a promise of confidentiality,” said Representative Heagney. “This measure protects the integrity of the confidential process, and supports freedom of the press in a broad sense, allowing journalists to uncover and relay information that is in the public interest which they might otherwise be unable to report.”

The bill now heads to the state Senate for action there.